

Made for the Mountains

A California log home is constructed to perfectly suit its Sierra Mountain surroundings.

story by THEA MARX photos by RUSS MCCONNELL

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How does one honor a long-held family dream to build a mountain cabin retreat? If you're Rick Kerr, with a carefully scribed log home built where that dream originated.

A tribute to his mother, who used to snowshoe on the property, Sybil's Cabin was the realization of a dream for Rick and his family. "I wanted to share a beautiful part of the world," Rick says of his log-home building experience. "And to build a log home was a new challenge for me."

Rick placed enormous value on the romantic and historical value of building a log home and wished to keep it as historically correct as possible. He also wanted the structure to fit into the area while creating a friendly restful retreat. Built as a multifunctional property, serving as both a second home and a rental, Sybil's Cabin is styled after a Bavarian chalet — a perfect fit for its Sierra Mountains locale in Strawberry, California. Rick worked closely with builder Robert Lockerby of Summit Handcrafted Log Homes in Boise, Idaho, and Cyril Courtois, an experienced log-home designer, on construction details critical to the site, such as the property's close proximity to the American River, which required replacement of the soil with sand and rock to prevent dramatic settling; the intensely snowy region, which can see snowfalls as great as 12 feet; and the short building season. Careful consideration was given to everything from snow loads to a dual-use, open loft.

The team crafted a basic design out of sheer cost effectiveness — namely a simple shape that added square footage through additional floors, rather than expanding its footprint, and made use of the infrastructure through elements such as plumbing. Once it was mapped out, Rick worked with interior

Sybil's Cabin was carefully planned and designed for the terrain, including substantial allowance for foundation and snow-load engineering. The exterior comprises Scandinavian full-scribe handcrafted logs with wedge-notch corners, which allow the joint to tighten with shrinkage. The cabin was built with latewood timber, which is harvested at a certain time of year to preserve the newest growth layer. The bark is removed with water rather than drawknives to preserve the natural, organic quality of the wood and give it a silken finish.





The lower level (left) comprises a two-car garage, mudroom, media room, bedroom and bathroom. The media room has a stone focal point that mimics the upstairs fireplace but houses a TV instead.

In the open area combining the kitchen, dining room and living room (opposite), the focal point is the fireplace, which is flanked by two deep window seats illuminated by pendant lights. "I wanted to be able to see the beautiful forest from the second-floor landing," says interior designer Karren Wright. To accomplish that, French doors were installed along the back wall so they open onto the extended deck.

designer Karren Wright early in the building process by providing her the home's basic shape and asking her to help plan the rooms. "She was integral to the process," says Rick. "She made sure we had the right floor plan to make it as functional as possible."

Thinking lodge, sophisticated and homey, Rick and the interior designer went to work using words like cozy, open concept and con-

versation to drive the interiors. The lower level features a mudroom and media room, as well as one remote bedroom, and can be shut off from the rest of the cabin for separate use, thanks to a personal entrance. The main level serves as the gathering place, with the fireplace as the main focal point. Large French doors open onto the extensive deck that serves as an outdoor room in the summer. The master bedroom on this floor



RESOURCES

Square footage: 3,034

Bedrooms: 3

Bathrooms: 4

Architect: R.C.M. Cad Design Drafting Ltd., Abbotsford, BC (604-850-6723; loghome design.ca).

Builder: TMS Builders, Georgetown, CA (530-957-9999)

General contractor: Kerr Real Estate Advisors, Sacramento, CA (916-965-5100)

Interior designer: Karren Wright Interior Design, Sacramento, CA (916-454-1102)

Log detailing: Strawberry Services, Twin Bridges, CA (530-318-3772)

Log producer: Summit Hand-crafted Log Homes, Boise, ID (866-610-4074; summithandcrafted.com)

has a large window seat, deep enough to be used as a bed, that creates a focal point on the exterior.

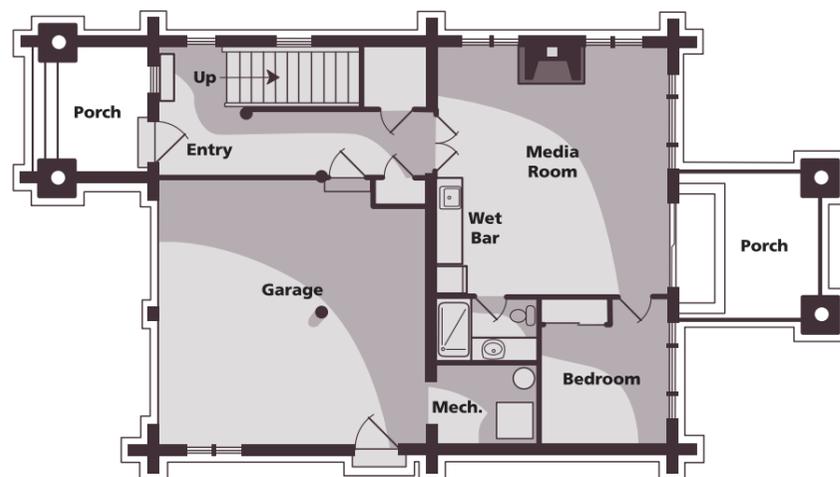
The upper-level loft was created when Rick realized that it added benefits with only a modest cost increase. Extending the plumbing for a fourth bath so every sleeping area had its own bathroom was a natural progression of the home's flexible use. The loft is open to the main-level living area and can be used for young

people to congregate or for a business meeting, depending on the furnishings used in the space.

The multiple uses this California cabin can supply is a testament to the team that Rick assembled. The home not only fits in with the terrain, but creates a space that has been enjoyed by many, whether it is the Kerr family on holiday or a group of climbers enjoying the magnificent Lake Tahoe area.

Rick wanted the dining area to be flexible enough to allow for small intimate setups (above) or large family-style gatherings. "People like to congregate around the kitchen," he notes. The forest-green color of the kitchen island sets it apart and adds texture; forest-green granite countertops and backsplash complement it. The oak floors are resilient to scratches — a plus given the flexible use of the cabin.

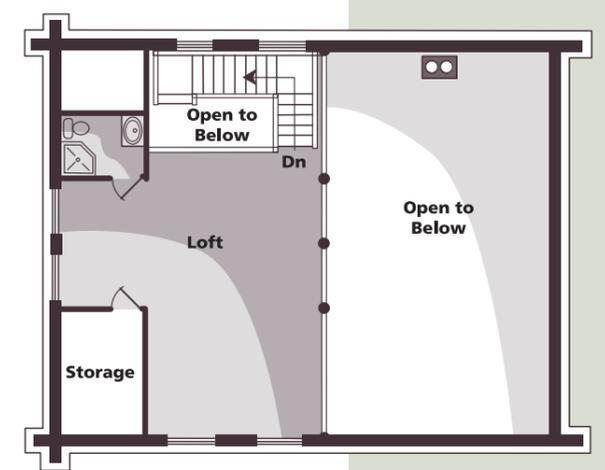
Knotty pine cabinetry (opposite) is used in both the master bathroom and kitchen. Large logs are prevalent throughout the home as well, including this bathroom's ceiling beams. The crisp green color on the drywall brightens the room.



Lower Level



Main Level



Upper Level

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